



## DRAFT TALKING POINTS – 2 MINUTES

### Overview:

- **\$1.48 billion dollars** – this is the number I want you to remember. This represents the amount of new, private investment generated by Charlotte's first light rail line called the Lynx Blue Line.
- The Lynx Blue Line is the first 9.6-mile lines of five planned rail lines which came on line in November of 2007 and by all accounts is a tremendous success. We're averaging more than **14,000 trips a day** during the week which annihilates our original projection of 9,100 trips. We are also running a **99.5 percent on-time** rate for all trips and have had no preventable accidents since we opened.
- Why light rail? Just like many other cities, Charlotte has seen a steady population increase over the past 10 years. We currently have a population of more than 650,000 and are expecting to add another 350,000 people by 2030.
- In addition to the population surge, we acknowledge national trends such as an aging baby boomer generation, the growth of non-children households and a growing focus on sustainability all which require us to think differently about how and where people want to live, work and play.

### Best Practices:

- We believe the reason Charlotte has been successful in Transit Oriented Development, or TOD, is because we approached it as one coordinated land use, economic development and transportation strategy. We never intended to build just a transit system...it was always seen as an integrated endeavor to maximize resources and create the best community possible.
- For fifteen (?) years the City has used its Centers, Corridors and Wedges Framework to guide growth to existing transportation corridors and to connect residential areas to employment and leisure. Center, Corridors and Wedges, works to provide neighborhoods of choice for a wide variety of lifestyles and life stages. It also seeks to limit sprawl to address the financial and the environmental costs sprawl creates. Without rail-based transit we simply cannot reach the goals for our Centers Corridors and Wedges strategy *and cannot provide the variety of housing choices that allow us to be a destination city.*

- TOD provides for a pedestrian-friendly environment, connected to rapid transit stations with an increased density of residential, retail and employment opportunities, creating a sense of place or community. These communities allow for a high quality of life and mobility, while simultaneously helping to reduce pollution and vehicle miles traveled.
- In addition to re-zoning eligible areas within one half-mile around the rail line to TOD, we also established station area plans which focus higher density land uses and employment growth around these areas. These high-quality urban environments are carefully planned and designed to attract and retain transit ridership.
- Our station area plans have assisted the development community as they set development standards for these areas, saving time and resources for developers who often spend time and money trying to anticipate what a City is looking for.
- To further promote integration and collaboration, we purposely placed dedicated TOD staff in both Economic Development and in the Charlotte Area Transit Authority for cross coverage. These positions were created to help businesses and developers throughout the development process. We believe having these direct points of contact has been especially important for the realization of TOD.
- This staff also pursues public / private partnerships to spur TOD projects. Utilizing various standard financial tools such as tax increment financing they work to help good projects become great projects by increasing density and improving design. The City also uses land it acquired through the construction process to help leverage TOD.
- In addition to these standard tools, Our City Council also established the South Corridor Infrastructure Project Fund, otherwise known as SCIP, to the tune of \$50M to address needed public infrastructure improvements along the line. This money is used to connect existing businesses and communities to the light rail line and prepare the way for future development.
- This monetary commitment from the City helps to encourage TOD. In addition, the Planning Commission offers sponsorships for property owners rezoning parcels to TOD.

- And it's working. The economic development impact has been tremendous. For the Lynx blue line which encompasses 11 station areas outside of our downtown we have experienced new private investment of:
  - \$246M in completed projects (2005-current)
  - \$522M in projects under construction; and another
  - \$642M in projects currently in the planning and permitting process, equaling more than \$1.4B for the period of 2005-2011 a significant amount of redevelopment for any city.
  
- These investment amounts equal to Projected New Tax Revenue of
  - Tax Revenue: \$24.1M Annually (2005-2011)
    - City Tax Revenue = \$8.5M Annually
    - County Tax Revenue = \$15.6M Annually
  
- We are currently planning for our second line, the Blue Line Extension – Northeast corridor which connects downtown to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Because of the success of the Blue line, we already have development underway in this corridor.
  
- The Blue line extension, is projected to open in 2015 with an estimates project cost of \$740.5M. The line is 11 miles and is different from the infill development around the Blue Line as the Northeast line is mostly greenfield which creates an even greater amount of development potential. We are estimating **\$9B of new investment around this line in the next 25 years.**
  
- As for how you all can assist cities with their transit efforts, we believe the federal funding criteria for projects should heavily benefit those who integrate land use, transportation and economic development into a cohesive TOD strategy.
  
- We also believe there must be a way to include more affordable housing in transit station areas. As the system works now, affordable housing is cost prohibitive. We must create programs to address the growing population who need affordable housing around transit to effectively meet the needs of our community.